



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site

1623 Central Blvd., Suite 213

Brownsville, Texas 78520

(956) 541-2785



File Code: Y14

June 1, 2005

Dear concerned citizen,

Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site is in the initial stage of preparing a Fire Management Plan. An important element in the process is public participation. We invite the public to express their comments and ideas about the use and management of fire and fuels within the park. We need your input to identify issues, areas requiring additional study, and topics to be considered in the environmental analysis.

We anticipate that fire management within the park will be of strong interest to park neighbors and visitors. Palo Alto Battlefield NHS preserves the site of the May 8, 1846 battle that marked the start of the Mexican-American War. The park protects the cultural landscape as well as the historical artifacts relating to the battle. Palo Alto Battlefield consists of brush and grassland dominated by cordgrass. The park is in a wildland-urban interface area, with two busy state highways (511 and 1847) along the southern and western boundary.

Depending on the results of your input and the effects to resources, we may use a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act. Categorical exclusions are actions that normally do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and therefore do not require further analysis in either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement. In June, 2003, the *Federal Register* gave notice that activities involving hazardous fuels reduction in certain circumstances may fall under this categorical exclusion. The categorical exclusion would not apply where hazardous fuels reduction would have an adverse effect on cultural resources or federally-listed threatened or endangered species.

Through the plan, the park will identify how fire and fuels management projects can be used to achieve management goals of natural and cultural resource preservation and interpretation. Some of the tools the park will consider include fire suppression, mechanical fuel reduction, and prescribed fire. The park welcomes your input in understanding issues and developing alternatives for achieving these management goals. Some of the issues identified to date include effects to air quality, soils, vegetation,

wildlife, cultural resources, and visitor experience. Please send your scoping comments to:

Superintendent,
Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site
1623 Central Boulevard, #213
Brownsville, TX 78520-8326

Electronic mail comments should be sent to: myrna_palfrey-perez@nps.gov

Please submit your comments by June 12, 2005. Please note that names and addresses of people who comment become part of the public record. If you wish us to withhold your name and or address, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comments. We will make all submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,

Myrna Palfrey,
Superintendent